Christians forbidden to fight.

AN

ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

RHODE-ISLAND PEACE SOCIETY;

AT ITS

TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING,

JUNE 30, 1844.

woolss 1500 —

By EDWARD B. HALL,
Pastor of the First Congregational Church, in Providence, R. I.

PROVIDENCE:
H. H. BROWN, PRINTER.
1844.

To Rev. E. B. Hall,

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Rhode-Island Peace Society, July 1st, 1844, it was *Voted*, That the thanks of this Board be presented to the Rev. Edward B. Hall, for his able and impressive Address on Peace, delivered before the Rhode-Island Peace Society, last evening, and that Henry Cushing, Samuel W. Wheeler and Gamaliel L. Dwight be a Committee to request a copy for the press.

In accordance with the above vote, we earnestly request that you will consent to the publication of your Address.

HENRY CUSHING,
SAMUEL W. WHEELER,
GAMALIEL LYMAN DWIGHT, } *Committee*

Rev. Edward B. Hall.

Providence, July 2, 1844.

Gentlemen,

In complying with your request, so kindly expressed, and yielding my own judgment to that of the Board, as to the publication of an Address so hastily prepared, I ought to say that the whole of it was not written when delivered, and I may not recall the exact words. The discourse contains nothing probably that has not been said by others. Its object is simple and humble. I had no thought, as some suppose, of making a complete argument on the difficult question of 'self-defence' in all cases. I meant only to present a view of the *Christian* doctrine of Peace and War. If the truth be admitted, and still the practicability denied, I leave to others to reconcile the two opinions. I assert the principle, and am content to abide by the Gospel.

Respectfully yours,

EDWARD B. HALL.

To Messrs. Henry Cushing,
S. W. Wheeler,
G. L. Dwight.

ADDRESS.

I SPEAK at the request of the Rhode-Island Peace Society. They would revive a former practice of having an address in connection with their annual meeting. I speak in their behalf, but in my own name. They are not accountable for any position I may take, as I am not accountable to them. On this ground only can I consent to speak on this or any subject; in perfect freedom. At the same time, I have no thought of abusing the confidence placed in me, by dwelling on points of difference, when no one can reply. But so far as those points are involved in the general discussion of the subject, I cannot, and shall not attempt, to avoid them.

I take the broad ground of the American Peace Society. The object of that Society, and the only proper object of any Peace Society, is to abolish WAR. Without stopping to define war, without admitting or implying the lawfulness of any kind of war, or troubling itself about other questions, or insisting on particular views of resistance, government, or punishment, the American Peace Society, as its Constitution declares, "is founded on the principle that all war is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel." This is enough. We want no higher ground, we can accept none lower. We are opposed to war. In the Preamble of our own Constitution, we say war is "inhuman and unchristian."

This again is enough, if we abide by it. It is my chief purpose at this time, to ask, how far we do abide by it; we of this society, and you of this community; we all as Christian men. We are Christian men, in knowledge and obligation at least. Christianity is our light and our supreme law. We profess allegiance to it. It publishes Peace; we are bound to seek peace, and we combine to spread it. It forbids War; we are bound, and we associate, to prevent war, to shun it, to denounce it, to say and do all in our power to abolish it here and everywhere. Our religion is Love. We will cherish and exercise love toward all men; the friend, and not less the enemy; the neighbor, the foreigner, the sufferer and sinner, wherever they dwell upon the face of the earth. They are all brethren, and their only Lord and Master is the Prince of Peace.

This is our profession. And my inquiry is, what is our practice? There would seem to be a singular contrast. Christianity has breathed peace for two thousand years, and Christians have been at war nearly the whole of that time. Christianity has sent out many missionaries and teachers to convert men, but a hundred times as many have gone out to destroy men. Christianity has aimed to save souls, but its disciples have armed themselves to injure the body, and pervert, if not ruin, the principles of men. Christians have differed on doctrines and forms, but have agreed in the liberty of persecuting and killing each other. Christians have expended enormous sums on various benevolent objects, but most on war, and least on peace. Christians are now only beginning to believe in the *practicability* of universal peace, or to give their time or money for the promotion of its principles.

Several questions are at once suggested here. How far do we feel ourselves bound by the precepts of a religion which we profess? How far do we believe that he who brought this religion "knew what was in man," and enjoined that only which man can comprehend and observe? How far do we trust the predictions of this religion, and believe they will be fulfilled? By

what means do we expect the power of this religion will be extended, its spirit diffused, and its blessings realized? These questions pertain to many subjects and causes, which now engage the interest of men. Leaving all other applications to every one's conscience, we look to the single question of peace and war, and the Christian's duty in regard to it.

Our Saviour spake with authority. He spake as never man spake. He gave positive and broad precepts. Some of these precepts forbid us to resist evil, and require us to forgive and bless those who curse and injure us. No one denies that the letter and spirit of this religion are emphatically for Peace; and for peace, not as policy only, but as duty. It is not simply recommended, it is enjoined. And all that opposes this is forbidden. The whole spirit of war, anger, revenge, retaliation, violence, are prohibited in language so direct, so comprehensive, so unqualified, that if it does not prohibit *all* war, it is difficult to conceive of any words that will. The language is this. "Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Resist not evil. See that none render evil for evil to any man. Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Have peace one with another. Lay aside all malice. Avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger, feed him. Overcome evil with good."

Such are the precepts of what we call *our* religion. How are they regarded? Are we bound by them, or are we not? Ought we to receive and observe them according to their plain import, or may we construe and apply them, as the age of the world, the prejudices of society, the conduct of an enemy, the condition of a country or city, or the immediate interests of an individual, seem to require? What the answer to this has generally been, is known to all. With the exception of the two or three first centuries of the Christian era, every age of Christianity, and the great majority of Christians of every name and place, have virtually declared these precepts to be null and void. It is not enough to say, that they have made them bend to circumstances. They have done what they could to annul them. The people

and the clergy, the intelligent and the ignorant, the profane and the pious, those who have professed to follow Christ as decidedly as those who have owned no higher leader than Cæsar, have said by their actions, and often in plain words, that these precepts are not binding. They have set themselves in direct opposition to the temper and letter of the Gospel. That says—'Love your enemies'; they say, 'Hate your enemies'; or love them in that sense only, which is consistent with injuring and destroying them. Christianity says—'Resist not evil'; Christians say—'Resist unto death.' Christianity has enjoined—'If your enemy hunger, feed him;' Christians have cried—'starve him.' It is written—'Be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men;' many have replied—'Be armed, vigilant, sensitive to the slightest affront, resolute to punish every injury, as individuals and nations.'

Here are two facts, which no one can question. And that they have co-existed side by side for so long a time, that even now men do not readily see their inconsistency and utter incompatibility, is one of the deep mysteries of human character and life. Does it admit of any explanation, that relieves the strong and painful contrast? What reasons have Christians given, or can any give, for allowing such a loose construction or direct contradiction to a portion of our religion?

One reason given, and perhaps the most common, is that such precepts were not intended to be understood literally. Suppose this to be true; how were they intended to be understood? They must have some meaning—what is it? Do they mean that you may do the opposite of what they assert? That cannot be. When our Lord says, 'Love and bless your enemies,' he cannot mean, 'Hate and injure them.' When he lays down that broad precept, which has involved so much discussion, 'Resist not evil,' whatever qualifications it may require, it cannot mean, that you may offer violent resistance to evil, that you may pursue, and persecute, and despoil, and murder, those who do you evil. Restrict or enlarge any precept as you

will, you cannot by any construction, by any thing short of actual violation, draw or justify the inference, that you may carry violence, stratagem, carnage and death, into the towns and habitations of men. Yet this is war. Call it offensive or defensive, this is war; and if these precepts prohibit this, they prohibit war.

But we have heard only a negative explanation. These precepts are not to be taken literally, it is said. We ask, again, how are they to be taken? The answers are various.

We are told, they only mean that we must not *begin* aggression. That is singular, for the direct word is, that we must not *return* aggression. This is their very point, and their only point. They suppose evil to be offered, and they forbid us to resist it. They place before you an enemy, and they command you to do him good. They prohibit retaliation, revenge, and every act that would resemble them, every disposition that prompts them. "See that none"—neither rulers nor people, individuals or nations, those in the present or any age of the world, those who are favored or those who are oppressed—"see that *none* render evil for evil unto any man."

This opens the great question as to offensive and defensive war. I know the difficulties of that question. We have all felt them. But our single inquiry now pertains to the Gospel. What is the law of Christ? Does he ever suffer his servants to fight? Does he make or intimate any distinction between offensive and defensive fighting? Can the distinction, in point of fact, be defined and sustained? No. There are no wars that do not partake of both characters. All people say, that their own wars are defensive. It is a singular and instructive fact, that Napoleon is said by his biographer to have frequently and solemnly declared, that he never waged an offensive war! In any case, the evils of war belong to one kind, as much as the other. And it is these evils, that make war unchristian and unlawful. Christianity forbids war, without qualification. It forbids evil for evil. It commands us to do good to those who wrong us. This is undeniable. It is there, on the page of the glowing record, from the lips of the living Master. If you say, it cannot be always

obeyed, I answer, wherever it *cannot* be obeyed, it need not be. And I do not know that we have any farther license. The rule must be obeyed wherever it can be. If it were only violated where it cannot be observed, there would be little evil. If there were no offensive war, there would be no defensive. And more than this, it would be found, and so far as tried it has been found, that in proportion, not to prompt resistance, but to meekness and forbearance, evil has been and always will be withheld. It has grown into a maxim, that the best security for peace, is to be prepared for war. I believe just the contrary. There are remarkable facts in the history of the world, which directly contradict the maxim. And the time must come—faith will do much to hasten it—when that maxim shall read—the best security for peace is confidence in God and confidence in man; proved by obedience to all God's commands, and kindness and forgiveness in all intercourse with man.

Have there been no literal trials of our Lord's doctrine? Have there been no successful experiments? Look at his primitive disciples. They who lived nearest him, were likely to know what he intended, and surely that was an age of the world not favorable to pacific principles. Yet these principles were observed, and to the letter; yes, and to the death. The first Christians resisted unto blood; but it was the resistance of unyielding faith, and the blood of the unconquered martyr. They would die, but they would not fight. And which is the true courage and heroism, that which lays down its life in the despised cause of principle, or that which rushes with heated passion and loud applause to the triumph of victory or the death of glory? Marcellus was a Roman centurion. He became a Christian; and believing that war was no longer permitted to him, he threw down his belt at the head of the legion, declaring that he could serve no longer. He was committed to prison. He still insisted, 'it is not lawful for a Christian to bear arms for any earthly consideration;' and he was put to death.—Maximilian was summoned to be enrolled as a soldier. 'I am a Christian, and cannot fight,' said he. He was threatened. 'I cannot fight, if I die.' He was led to ex-

ecution. Such were the principles and practice of all the Christians of the two first centuries and part of the third. After Christianity had spread over almost the whole of the known world, Tertullian says of a large part of the Roman armies, "not a Christian could be found amongst them." In the third century, Christianity began to be corrupted from various causes, and Christians began to be soldiers. The numbers increased with the corruptions of the religion.

We may be told here that the Jews fought. It does not follow that Christians should fight. We are not Jews. We have a more perfect religion. They were allowed, if not commanded, to do many things which are neither commanded nor allowed now. Christ is our leader, and his weapons are all spiritual. The Jews may well be our teachers in this respect; for they are accustomed to tell us, that 'our wars are an evidence that the Prince of peace is not come.' What can we say in reply? "Some years since, when it was advertised that a Christian sermon would be preached in favor of peace, a paper was found affixed to the church by a Jew, and it had words to this effect—'Our Messiah, when he comes, will establish a system of mercy, peace, and kindness upon earth, while among you, Christians, nothing but disputes, animosities, and cruelties mark your passage through the world. Probably your religion sanctions these things; ours does not. Has the golden era of public peace and private love prophecied in the sacred volume ever yet been witnessed? Speak candidly, Christian, has it been once seen within the last eighteen hundred years?'"*

Indeed, who can look out on the face of Christendom, and not weep? In the multitude of sects calling themselves Christian, we see but two who have put to the test the Christian principle of peace. Happily, they are enough to show that these principles will abide the test, and to prove what we have said, that the strictest obedience is also the best security. The history of the Moravians and the Quakers, both of whom adopted and adhered

* Macnamara's Essay.

to the doctrine of entire forbearance in all cases, is full of instruction on this point. We can notice but two periods of their history. In Ireland, during the Rebellion of 1798, when bigotry, revenge, and the very worst forms of war and murder were raging furiously, the Friends took the first step toward the vindication of their principles, by recommending to all their members, that those who had warlike weapons of any kind in their houses, should destroy them. It was at once done; a fact in itself evincing some courage. They then refused to sell any article to the military, which could be used directly for purposes of war; not a selfish act. Through the whole commotion, they kept up their religious meetings unharmed, though compelled often to seek their way through contending soldiers and over the bodies of the slain. They were threatened, but offering no resistance, the threats were not executed. They were imprisoned; but nothing being proved against them, they were set at liberty. They sheltered the wounded of both parties; still they escaped. Only one of their number was put to death, and he had resorted to arms. Not one of their houses was destroyed, and when strangers afterwards passed through the desolate streets, and saw a house standing alone and uninjured, they would say, 'That, doubtless, was the house of a Quaker.'

See the same triumph of peace over war, in the conduct of the same sect, during the settlement of some parts of our country, and in the terrible Indian wars of the last century. The Friends would neither fight, nor carry arms for protection, nor seek the shelter of garrisons. Amid all the ravages and horrors of barbarian warfare, while every member of every community but their own sought safety in flight or in forts, they quietly pursued their occupation in the fields and villages, undefended and unharmed. Only three of the Society were killed, and they had timidly deserted their principles, and by putting themselves in the attitude of defence, provoked aggression. What instances of the same truth, what signal and beautiful results, cluster about the name of William Penn! Say you a State cannot be founded, protected,

and made to prosper, without arms? Look at his State, rising in the midst of six Indian nations, who were waging war upon all surrounding States, yet continuing undisturbed for more than seventy years, with not even a militia for its defence! "The Pensylvanians"—says the historian, "became armed, though without arms; they were strong, though without strength; safe, without any of the ordinary means of safety. The constable's staff was the only instrument of authority amongst them, for the greater part of a century, and never during the administration of Penn or that of his proper successors, was there a quarrel or a war!" And what gave them this unexampled security? What constituted their strength? The spirit of peace, unconquerable itself, conquering all else, converting the ferocity of a savage foe into the kindness of a faithful friend. Verily, "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

I intended to notice some other reasons given by many for departing from the plain precepts of the Gospel. One of the strangest, yet most prevalent, and affecting other relations of society, is the assertion that many precepts which bind us as individuals, do not bind us as portions of the community, or subjects of the state; and that even the golden rule does not reach to civil and political connections. We must give a brief answer to a weak argument. There can be but one standard of right and wrong. Truth is single and unalterable. Moral principles change not with skies, states, and factions. Individual character and accountableness can never be merged in a crowd, reversed by a human law, or destroyed by an army. If it be wrong in you to defraud your neighbor, all the reason in the world cannot prove that it is not equally wrong in your nation to defraud another nation; and equally wrong in you to do anything to aid or countenance it. If it be inhuman and unchristian, in one man to kill another, it is inhuman and unchristian for one hundred men to attempt to kill a hundred men. If the law of God is supreme, it is supreme everywhere. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

But one other reason can we here notice. 'It is vain,' we are told, 'to contend against nature; while men are men, they will fight.' That is to say, while they are disposed and think it best to fight, they will fight. But may not their dispositions be changed, and their views of right and of policy be altered? 'Yes, you may do something of the kind. But not much, never all. To think of converting the world to such principles is ridiculous.' To this reasoning, which in some shape comes from many respectable and Christian sources, there are two replies. First, it is never ridiculous to think of doing anything that ever has been done through the power of simple truth. Mankind have already witnessed revolutions in opinion and practice on this subject, nearly as great as those we look and pray for. Compare the spirit of war, or the modes of warfare now, with those of the middle ages, or of a few centuries back. Compare the feelings and customs of Christian nations, bad as they are, with the conduct of barbarous nations and savage hordes toward their enemies. Within a short period, some of the greatest barbarities have ceased. The settling of private disputes by the sword, which was once so prevalent in Europe, that during the first eighteen years of Henry IV, 4000 French gentlemen were killed in private combats, has been either wholly abolished, or greatly frowned upon and checked, in all countries. It is not two hundred years since prisoners of war were compelled to toil for their conquerors like slaves. What people now dare, or seem desirous, to sentence their captives to the oar or the dungeon for life? How long is it, since vessels were fitted out, even in British ports, on both sides the Atlantic, for the avowed purpose of piracy, and the successful robber and murderer in the high pathways of the world were rewarded with office and glory? Now the pirate is branded as the "enemy of the human race," and an attempt has been made by our own government to put a stop even to licensed privateering, throughout the Christian world. The slave trade too, than which not war itself has been more interwoven with society, or supposed more reputable, has been made by law at least to be

piracy. Most men have come to see the magnitude of that dark iniquity, and the duty and the practicability of sweeping it from God's earth. Nor will it do to tell us any longer, that this or any evil, though its age be that of the mountains, and its foundations stronger than they, because laid in human passions, cannot be rooted up and cast away by that, which, under God who inspires it, is the sovereign of the universe,—mind, acting by FAITH and LOVE.

There is another answer to the last and every objection. It is drawn from the promise of God. It is the promise of God. It is the sure word of prophecy. It is the seal of him who cannot lie. If not another word had been written by the pen of inspiration, if not another light had beamed from the thick darkness, and nothing in the past were known, and nothing in the future to be seen, for encouragement, one clear and sure prediction were enough:—"They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Nay, if there were no positive prophecy, as there are many, yet if the truth and designed prevalence of Christianity be admitted, it is an answer to every doubt, a rebuke to every sneer. Convince me that war is to be perpetual, and you destroy my faith in Christianity. Leave me that faith, and mountains move; war, slavery, intemperance, and all kindred woes are crushed beneath the conqueror's foot. Man is free, man is at peace, man lives as the brother of man, and the child of God.

We have said nothing of the evils and horrors of war. They are not to be numbered, still less described. It is easy to give figures, showing the multitude of lives sacrificed to this Moloch; but these from their very vastness, make little impression. We are told that 20,000 men fell on the field at Austerlits; 30,000 at Dresden; 40,000 at Waterloo; and at Borodina, 80,000. Here in four battles, there were slain seven times as many people, as this whole city contains. And yet who feels it half as much, as when we hear of a single murder in our streets, or in Cranston?

We know that three conquerors, Cæsar, Alexander, and Napoleon, have alone swept off six millions of lives; equal to the whole population of the United States at the beginning of this century. Yet Colt, who killed one man in single combat, is considered a worse man, and viewed with more horror, than Cæsar, Alexander, or Napoleon. If your dwelling or your neighbor's takes fire, and a little child or aged parent is consumed in the flames, what shuddering it creates. But at Moscow, the hospitals, containing twelve thousand of the wounded, were purposely burnt up, with all the inmates; and many read of this with no emotion, except wonder at the sublimity of the scene, or the daring of the mighty incendiary and assassin.

But the lives lost, are, I had almost said, the least of the evils of war. The moral evils far exceed all others. We hear of Expenses, and they affect some minds more than vices. Then let them be known. It is indeed something, when we consider how sordid men are, and what calls there are for money, and complaints of these calls; it is something that so short and limited a war as our last with England added $120,000,000 to our public debt; and that the war which grew out of the French revolution, cost Great Britain eleven hundred millions of pounds sterling. It is something that the standing force of France may be estimated at nearly four hundred thousand men; involving not only the vast cost of their support, but their utter loss, to say the least, for any other purpose. It is sad, in any view, that such a nation as England should have passed more than five hundrnd years in war, since the Norman conquest. It is very sad, that all expenditures together, for all good objects, bear no proportion to the *one for war!* And then see the kind of calculation, on which war is waged. Suppose a case, not far from a fact. France owes us 5,000,000. She refuses or delays to pay. We proclaim war against her. We spend in that war, though it last but a year, ten or twenty times the amount due to us, and lose the debt beside; for war cancels all prior obligations. This is a simple table of gain and loss. They who think it all balanced by a

thing called 'national honor,' attendent on possible victory, at the cost of many lives, are poor speculators, if nothing worse.

But the heart sickens at the thought of estimating, in this way, the evils of war. Multiply the loss of money, men, time, and business ten-fold, make the physical and mental suffering, on the field, in the prison, the hospital, and the *home*, as great as you can imagine it—for imagination can never compass it—there is that remaining, and separate, and certain, which surpasses all the rest by precisely the difference between the temporal and the eternal. The moral evil is the unmeasured and immeasurable woe. War is crime. From its beginning to its end, it is crime; a violation of Christianity, an outrage upon humanity. War is corruption. It introduces, feeds, makes familiar and almost necessary, every form of vice. And the monstrous peculiarity is, that crime and corruption are not only attendant upon war, but are legalized by it. It sanctions them. It requires them. It tells you they are not wrong, but right; duty, valor, patriotism, glory. It tells you that you may and must butcher your brother. It tells you that those acts which at all other times are prohibited and punished, under the name of robbery, rapine, fraud, perfidy, murder, here bear different names and an opposite moral character. It allows hatred, malignity, rapacity, hypocricy, and uses them all for its direct ends. It employs the arts and sciences, the resources of nature and ingenuity of man, for man's destruction. It blinds the eye, and deadens the conscience to all that seemed evil. It tempts us to admire what we ought to abhor, and puts that first in glory which should be first in enormity. Cicero, in his day, said—"War, pestilence, and famine, have been the great scourges of mankind. The two latter are always mentioned with horror; while the former is so blazoned with the trophies of heroism and valorous exploits, that few are found who object to its principle."

And this is not all, nor the worst. The spirit of war penetrates the Church, and lays its iron and bloody hand on the altar and the priest. Not to desecrate or murder merely—that were

comparatively light—but to convert them to its own purpose, to make them speak for it, and willingly work for it. The Christian church has never forbidden war. Its Lord forbade it, but his church has sanctioned it, and waged it, and prayed for it, and borne its reeking trophies as offerings to God! Greeks and Latins fight at the very door of the holy sepulchre, and cut and destroy each other for admission to perform mass, mingling with their sacrifices their own and their brothers' blood. A Turk, at Jerusalem, once said to Wolff, the missionary—'Why do you come to us?' 'To bring you peace.' 'Peace,' replied the Turk, leading him to a window, and pointing to Mount Calvary, —'there, upon the very spot where your Lord poured out his blood, the Mohammedan is obliged to interfere, to prevent the Christians from shedding the blood of each other.' The Emperor of China is said to have given as a reason for excluding the Christian religion from his empire, that, "wherever Christians go, they whiten the soil with human bones." And where they do not fight, they countenance it. They never denounce it. A heretic is excommunicated; but the duellist and the warrior are cherished. The theatre is denounced; the battle-field is sought, perhaps prayed for. A recent ecclesiastical convention condemned dancing, and at the same time refused to express an opinion on slavery; on war, it might have been still more difficult to bring them to an expression. I must borrow here a passage from Noah Worcester, the "Friend of Peace," who thus writes, as we find in the excellent Memoir just published:

"I can say with the greatest truth, that I am unacquainted with any errors which have been adopted by any sect of Christians, which appear to me more evidential of a depraved heart than those which sanction war, and dispose men to glory in slaughtering one another. Should we call to mind any one of the supposed essential doctrines of any sect of Christians in New England, we might ask with confidence, what is the evil of denying or disbelieving that doctrine, when compared with the evil of believing that it is consistent with the spirit and precepts

of the Gospel, for Christians of different nations to engage in war; to meet in the field of battle, and destroy one another, by hundreds, by thousands, and by tens of thousands."

Nor is even this the worst. Christian men and women seem to undergo an entire change of nature, under the influence of the war-spirit. The forgiving become resentful, the gentle are violent, the kind malignant, and the peaceful warlike. To-day, they shudder at the thought of killing a man. To-morrow, war being declared, they deliberately arm themselves, go out, aim the deadly weapon, see a neighbor or brother fall, aim again, and he is the best soldier who shoots the most men. This is the avowed principle of war. When brought out in the bold language of the famous "Suwarrow Catechism," so called, it shocks us. But is it worse than the common fact, or at least the admitted principle? This "Catechism" contains the directions of the celebrated Russian General whose name it bears, one of the great captains of the last century.* It reads thus—"Push hard with the bayonet. The ball will lose its way; the bayonet never. The ball is a fool; the bayonet a hero. Stab once, and off with the Turk from the bayonet! Stab the second! Stab the third! A hero will stab half a dozen! If three attack you, stab the first, fire on the second, and bayonet the third." Here is a specimen of a modern production, which the Russian soldiers so admire, that they give it the sacred name of catechism. And he who wrote it was remarkably punctilious in his observance of all the ceremonies of his religion, and is said never to have given the signal for battle without crossing himself, and kissing the image of St. Nicholas! This is dreadful. Yet, in regard to the language ascribed to him, suppose it to be addressed by one of our own distinguished generals to his ardent soldiers on the eve of a battle; or suppose its spirit to be expressed, in time of peace, by a Fourth of July orator; would it provoke a remonstrance, or a peal of applause?

We may not love blood, but the laws of war require it. They

* Suwaroff.

leave no option. There is no slavery or despotism like theirs. The moment you become a soldier, your moral freedom ceases. You are enrolled under a new master, and a tyrant. You own allegiance to a man, who may command you to do what Christ and God forbid, and it must be done. You must shoot, or be shot. And what wonder, if you lose the will, as well as the power, to obey God rather than man? Here is the great evil. It belongs to the moral nature. It is that man ceases to be man, and ceases to respect man; that gentle woman is changed to a fiend, thirsting for blood; that the Christian is a determined and glorying destroyer. The fact and the moral effect are seen in a single instance. In the late war of the Carlists in Spain, several officers of rank were taken prisoners. Their victor, who was a humane man, despatched a courier to the rival commander, offering to exchange these prisoners for several officers of his own previously taken. In two days the courier returned, and found the General seated with his illustrious prisoners at his mess, treating them with all kindness and honor. The letter was instantly opened and read thus—"The officers you require, I have already shot." The General rose from the table, threw the letter to his guests, and said: "Gentlemen, I am sorry it is so, but there is no alternative. Blood for blood! Send for the confessor, for you have but a few minutes to live." They were dragged from the table, and shot in the court-yard.

Such is war. And, friends, we have something to do, if we hope ever to abolish it. Why this indifference and inaction concerning it? Why is it the feeblest cause among us? "Whence comes it"—asked Napoleon, for even the man of destiny was driven at last to ask this question—"whence comes it, that men do not feel Peace to be the first of wants, as well as of glories?" It is time for *us* to ask that question, and to ask it in this community. Why is it, that there is less done for peace here than for any other cause? Why is it, that this State Society can hardly gather men enough to elect its officers annually, and that very few of the ministers of the Gospel of Peace are seen there?

Why is it, that we fear to take the ground of the American Peace Society, declaring "all war contrary to the spirit of the Gospel," and acting accordingly? Is it that our late experience has taught the apparent necessity of being prepared for war? A sad experience it has been; too sad and recent for fair consideration yet. I trust it is to teach us other and better lessons. Let us remember it not for alienation, but for instruction and improvement. Let it convince us how great and terrible must be that evil, which weakens our faith in the Gospel, and impairs the principles of faith and love. If any one of us was turned from his devotion to this cause, or his confidence in moral means, by that short warfare, I know of no better argument against all war.

Let us speak for peace. Let us work for peace. Not by opposing human government, but by improving it, for government is founded in human nature and Christianity: not by decrying or forsaking the Christian church, but by upholding it, and extending its purest influences, its forgiving and blessed spirit. We have reason to be encouraged. War is not now the easy resort or favorite game that it once was. For a quarter of a century, a more general peace has prevailed through the world than ever before, it is believed, since Christians began to fight. The few attempts to disturb this peace, by selfish speculators, and pretended patriots, and rival politicians, have been quietly and signally defeated. War has been turned aside when it seemed inevitable, and would formerly have come. Kings and Presidents cannot plunge a nation in war at their own beck, or for their own poor game. The world is beginning to write and talk of some mode of arbitration in national disputes, or a Congress of nations, which Franklin desired and wrote for sixty years ago; one of the first statesmen in the world, who attempted publicly, and in the midst of revolutions, to stem the tide of universal opinion and practice in regard to war. From that period, the peace principle has been gaining, and Peace Societies have accomplished much that was once deemed impracticable and ridiculous to attempt. Now it is ridiculous to doubt, and disgraceful to be ignorant or opposed. The heads of all civilized nations

have read and consulted for peace. The despised tracts of Peace Societies are flying over the earth. In its great metropolis, London, there convened recently three hundred and thirty-seven Delegates, from several nations, the first grand Peace Convention; in which, we rejoice to say, America had thirty-seven representatives. And even as I write these last passages, a voice for peace comes to us from the very head of our national military. General Scott, who once stayed the uplifted arm of war on our angry borders, writes for peace, and sends out an influence, imperfect indeed and incongruous, yet much from such a source. He betrays the error which has done most for war, and is still the greatest obstacle in our path to universal peace. He speaks of "submission to outrage as a greater calamity than war." How mistaken! What greater calamity can there be than war? And what greater glory, than to suffer rather than avenge ourselves and destroy others? 'It is manly to resent,' said one, who had been insulted. 'Yes,' was the reply—'It may be manly to resent, but it is godlike to forgive.'

O why will we not forgive, as we would be forgiven? Why will we not trust the precepts of Christ, and the promises of God? Why in this State, at this moment, will we not beautifully crown the victory, and show the Christian majesty of the Law, by a free pardon of offenders, and the kindest offices to all who have injured us. Could we express this, even in feeling, a glorious celebration would it be of our approaching national Jubilee; instead of the tone of proud exultation, and the reading of that Declaration, which was not designed to keep alive forever the spirit of vaunting and the echo of war, against which, in this very connection, the Rhode-Island Peace Society, as the record shows, protested twenty years ago. Are we to withhold or fear the protest now? Shall political considerations, shall any considerations, prevent our union on Christian ground, in a Christian temper, for Christian ends? God forbid! Jesus forbid! In his all-conquering name, we will rally for Peace, not war. We will stand for Government, Religion, Liberty, Love; all in the spirit of the Gospel. And we trust many names and strong hands will be given us, for this compact, and this glorious cause.

NOTE.

Allusions are made and opinions expressed in this Address, which demand a larger discussion than I could give them in speaking, or can easily give now. But something I am bound to add, in explanation of my own purpose, and in answer to objections which I have heard.

It is said, first, that all which is here advanced is very true, but it is exceedingly *difficult* to carry it out and apply it in all cases. I answer—the same might be said of other precepts, and of all Christian requirements. Is that a reason for not declaring and insisting upon them? How can we ever be raised to the Christian stature, if it be not presented and required? Because it is difficult to obey and follow Christ, are we released from the obligation? It is the obligation that I have aimed to prove.

But it is not *practicable*, we are told. Clearly then it is not obligatory, and you deny the truth. There is no middle course. If you admit the truth, you admit the obligation. If you admit the obligation, you admit the practicability; for God requires nothing that we cannot do. If you are sure that you obey the precept as far as you *can*, it is enough. If not, the objection falls. To repeat it, is to condemn yourself.

Again, it is objected, that an argument against all war, which yet allows and defends *government*, defeats itself. Why? Has government never been sustained on peace principles? Did not the first Christians admit and uphold government? Were they guilty of treason and rebellion, when they refused to fight? Were the Quakers, in the Irish Rebellion, branded as traitors, disorganizers, and insurrectionists, and do we now so regard them? Had William Penn no government, or were seventy years no test of its strength? Suppose our government should command us to put children to death, in time of peace, or in some extremity of war. Would you obey? Become a soldier, and you *must* obey, though it be to the seizing of your neighbor's property, or the massacre of your enemy's household. Our government does require us to yield up a slave who flies to us for protection, and surrender him to bondage. Can you do it? I cannot, neither can I fight. I will rather suffer the consequences of refusing, whatever they may be. I will not resist, but I will suffer. As a good citizen, I have no right to attempt to subvert the government under which I live. But I have a right to protest against its abuses, to endeavor to correct them, and to suffer any penalty, rather than to violate principle.

But, it is still urged, government cannot be *sustained* without arms, nor its commands enforced. That has not been proved. It appears so in theory, I admit; and I may not see, or be able to show, in every case, how the obvious difficulties are to be overcome. But that does not destroy the principle. It does not disturb my faith in the principle. Though all theory were against it, as men reason, and all experience, as men are, I should still believe in the practicability of a thoroughly Christian government, on thorough peace principles, because I believe in the Christian religion, and in Christ's knowledge of man. But experience is *not* against it. Just so far as the trial has been made, the result has been favorable. Even if it could be proved, as it cannot, that a spirit of unarmed peace and uniform justice would fail to conquer an invading force, or suppress an actual insurrection, it would not follow that this spirit might not *prevent* both. How easily could England have retained her authority in these colonies, in the first stages of the conflict, or prevented all conflict and the terrible evils of eight years of warfare, by the least exercise of kindness, and the observance of the 'golden rule?' Is not the same truth apparent, at this moment, in her relation to Ireland? And who believes that her treatment of China, in the successful demand of millions of pounds and of various privileges, at the mouth of the cannon, will ultimately extend British power, or wealth, or glory? Who, again, can read any account of the French Revolution, especially in the splendidly awful details and dangerous power of Alison, without seeing point after point, times and places many, where a temper of conciliation on the part of government, in the strength of firmness yet of Christian kindness, would have saved all Europe from the most terrible scourge that the earth has known?

In truth, men associate with government, almost exclusively, one idea—that of authority and dignity. The government of a country, a city, a college, and even a family often, is not to 'stoop,' it is said, to hold any parley with an offender, or to retrace a single step, though it be wrong, and when, wrong or right, an opportunity of mutual consideration would heal the breach. No, its office is not to be parental, but only magisterial. Its 'honor' must be vindicated, at whatever expense. Its rule cannot be Christian, overcoming evil with good, but must be despotic, crushing the evil-doer, and slaying or intimidating every foe. And then, if the foe be not intimidated, but maddened, if the evil-doers multiply, and an army or a mob approach, we are gravely asked—what the spirit of peace can do now, when war has begun, and government is defied! We ask in return—what could not the spirit of peace have done, had it been exercised when it ought? And what or who is responsible for the failure, and the fearful consequences?

But it was not my purpose, in the Address, to treat of civil insurrec-

tion or private assault and defence, but only of international war, with which alone the Peace Society concerns itself. I am not satisfied, that we have *no* right of self-defence. Still less do I believe, that a man cannot support a government, without being responsible for its whole character and conduct. Some of the new theories on these points are preposterous. A man may defend himself, his family, and his country, he is bound to do it, by all the means given him, short of the violation of God's laws and Christ's precepts. Those laws and precepts, every one is to study and interpret for himself. But let him not interpret them under the common and delusive idea, that we have *instincts* which are above all laws. This is the chief plea for violent resistance and various war. And what are instincts? Natural propensities, appetites, passions, impulses. Do these make the whole nature of man? Do they belong to his higher nature? Do they not require to be controlled, brought into subjection to reason and religion? It is a marvellous fact, that those who see the weakness and errors of native man, those particularly who believe man to be deeply if not totally depraved, can yet argue from this very nature in justification of violent impulse, and apology for war! And then follows the other prevalent delusion—that the loss of 'honor,' or the loss even of 'life,' is a greater evil than sin and remorse. Far from it. The life of the body is not the chief good. The death of the body is not the chief evil. Our own death, if prepared to die, is an inestimable blessing, compared with the violation of conscience, and the sending of another unprepared soul, in its very violence and wrath, to the judgments of eternity. And if this be true in regard to private and personal conflict, how much more in all cases of war, wide-spread havoc, national and mutual destruction?

Reference is made, in the close of the Address, to the state of feeling in our own community, and the wish expressed that kindness might be extended to the offenders. This had reference more to feeling and general treatment, than to legal process or any individual. I was not then aware, that an act of 'amnesty' had just been passed by the General Assembly, offering pardon and liberty to all who own allegiance to the government. I see not how government, as such, can do more than this. The rest is to be done by individuals, in the spirit of forgiveness, conciliation, and Christian forbearance. Let this spirit make full proof of its power. Be the past as it may, what can the present or the future gain, from continued provocations? The victor can always afford to be generous, and is bound to be generous as well as just. And the vanquished are equally bound to accept justice without a taunt, however late or re-

luctant they may consider it, and to acknowledge generosity without the suspicious and irritating intimation, that it proceeds from fear. In a case like ours, where we have suffered so dreadfully from civil dissensions, where the spirit of war has been kindled anew, and the principles of peace in many breasts, in which they were enthroned, have been confessedly shaken, there are momentous Christian duties resting upon all. They who have sustained the laws, and manifested in their vindication no desire, that I can see, of vindictive punishment, but quite the contrary, can best prove it by using every opportunity to do good, and not evil, to the disaffected and alienated. And the latter should beware of putting an unfair construction on every act of the government, gentle or legally severe, calling the one cowardice and the other cruelty, and keeping their own and other minds inflamed and restless, when more than was first asked has been gained, when the means used to obtain it were not all peaceable, to say the least, and when continued crimination and irritation can answer no possible purpose, except to feed the spirit and protract the evils of *war*.

These remarks will show what I meant by language which was differently understood. I know the delicacy and danger of saying anything on the subject. But I know also the importance of the crisis. When moderation is most thankless, it is most a duty. Never was there a better opportunity of testing the power of Christian principles. Never was there a clearer duty, devolving upon every man—not least, surely, upon the minister of religion—to forget party and the thought of popularity, in advocating truth, love, liberty, mutual forbearance, and CHRISTIAN PEACE.

In the last chapter of "Wayland's Moral Science," the reader will find a condensed and strong argument in support of absolute peace-principles, as being practicable and politic, as well as required by Christianity.